IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-3, 5-14 and 16-21, and add new claims 22 – 39 as follows:

22. (New) A network storage system comprising:

virtual file system ("VFS") for storing file system information for a single file system, wherein a client of said network storage system accesses said VFS over a network to manage a plurality of files of said single file system, and wherein said client receives a storage resource locator ("SRL") from said VFS to access a file in said single file system; and

a plurality of storage centers, located in geographically disparate locations from each other and said client and coupled to said client through a public access network, each of said storage centers for storing a plurality files for said single file system, wherein said client of said network storage system transmits said SRL to one of said storage centers over said public access network to download files over said public access network, and wherein SRL comprises information to access a storage center over said public access network and comprises an unique file identifier to uniquely identify a file stored at one of said storage centers.

23. (New) The network storage system of claim 22, further comprising a storage port for accessing, at a client, said virtual file system and said storage centers.

24. (New) The network storage system of claim 23, further comprising at least one additional storage port for accessing said virtual file system and said storage centers in the event of a failover condition of said storage port.

24. (New) The network storage system of claim 22, wherein said storage centers comprise:

a plurality of distributed object storage managers (DOSMs) for receiving requests to access said storage center; and

storage cluster, comprising a plurality of intelligent storage nodes, for storing files of said network storage system and for servicing access requests from said DOSMs.

25. (New) The network storage system of claim 24, further comprising a multi-cast protocol for maintaining file information at said DOSMs regarding files stored in said intelligent storage nodes.

26. (New) The network storage system of claim 24, wherein said DOSMs further comprise a data cache for caching at least a subset of files stored in said intelligent nodes.

27. (New) The network storage system of claim 26, further comprising a load balancing fabric for selecting a DOSM for an access request based on demand to access said storage center, and for caching data for files in high demand in said data caches of said DOSMs.

28. (New) The network storage system of claim 22, further comprising a dynamic failover mechanism for servicing access requests from a disparate storage center in the event that a failure occurs in another one of said storage centers.

29. (New) The network storage system of claim 1, further comprising a content delivery network coupled to said network storage system.

30. (New) A method for storing files in a network storage system, said method comprising the steps of:

storing file system information in a virtual file system ("VFS") for a single file system;

receiving a request from a client at said VFS to access a file in said network storage system;

generating at said VFS, in response to said request from said client, a storage resource locator ("SRL");

storing a plurality files for said single file system in a plurality of storage centers, said storage centers located in geographically disparate locations from each other;

coupling said storage centers to said client through a public access network;

transmitting, from said client to one of said storage centers, over a public access network, said SRL, wherein said SRL comprises information to access a storage center over said public access network and comprises an unique file identifier to uniquely identify a file stored at one of said storage centers; and

downloading, over said public access network, said file identified by said SRL from said storage center identified to said client.

31. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising accessing, at a client, said virtual file system and said storage centers using a storage port.

32. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising said virtual file system and said storage center in the event of a failover condition of said storage port from at least one additional storage port.

33. (New) The method of claim 30, wherein downloading said file from said storage center comprises:

receiving a request for access to said storage center;

selecting one of a plurality of distributed object storage managers (DOSMs) to service said request; and

accessing an intelligent storage node from said DOSM selected to service said request.

34. (New) The method of claim 33, further comprising issuing commands from a multi-cast protocol to maintain file information at said DOSMs regarding files stored in said intelligent storage nodes.

35. (New) The method of claim 33, further comprising caching at least a subset of files stored in said intelligent nodes at said DOSMs.

36. (New) The method of claim 33, further comprising:

selecting a DOSM for a download request based on demand to access said storage center; and

caching data for files in high demand in said DOSMs.

37. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising servicing access requests from a disparate storage center in the event that a failure occurs in said storage center.

38. (New) The method of claim 30, further comprising accessing said storage center from a content delivery network.

39. (New) A network storage system comprising:

virtual file system ("VFS") for storing file system information for a single file system, wherein a client of said network storage system accesses said VFS over a network to manage a plurality of files of said single file system, and wherein said client receives a storage resource locator ("SRL") from said VFS to access a file in said single file system; and

a storage center, coupled to said client through a public access network, for storing a plurality files for said single file system, wherein said client of said network storage system transmits said SRL to said storage center over said public access network to download files over said public access network, and wherein SRL comprises information to access said storage center over said public access network and comprises an unique file identifier to uniquely identify a file stored at said storage center.